

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method of offering coupons through a couponing system ~~sponsored by a credit card company~~ to a consumer at a point of sale, such method comprising the steps of:

detecting entry of an identifier of an item to be purchased by the consumer at the point of sale;

searching a database using the identifier of the item to identify a coupon that provides a discount on a purchase price of the item to any consumer when used with a predetermined ~~credit card provided by the sponsoring credit card company~~;

calculating a discount offered by the coupon for purchase of the item with the predetermined ~~credit~~ card; and

displaying at the point of sale the calculated discount available to the consumer based upon use of the predetermined ~~credit~~ card and which calculated discount is not applicable with competing ~~credit~~ cards.

2. (original) The method of offering coupons as in claim 1 further comprising displaying a price of the item along with the discount.

3. (currently amended) The method of offering coupons as in claim 1 further comprising detecting entry of an identifier of the ~~credit~~ card.

4. (currently amended) The method of offering coupons as in claim 3 further comprising detecting acceptance of the predetermined credit card and printing out a receipt showing the calculated discount provided by use of the ~~credit~~ card.

5. (currently amended) The method of offering coupons as in claim 4 further comprising transferring a file containing the detected acceptance of the ~~credit~~ card and an identifier of the purchased item to a discount processing system.

6. (original) The method of offering coupons as in claim 5 further comprising transferring a summary of purchase of the item to a coupon clearing house and to a manufacturer of the item.

7. (original) The method of offering coupons as in claim 6 further comprising calculating a commission for processing the coupon for purchase of the item and forwarding the commission to the coupon clearing house and the discount processing system.

8. (original) The method of offering coupons as in claim 7 further comprising calculating a commission for processing the coupon and sending the calculated commission to an owner of the point of sale.

9. (currently amended) The method of offering coupons as in claim 1 further comprising detecting entry of an identifier of another ~~credit~~ card that is not the predetermined ~~credit~~ card.

10. (currently amended) The method of offering coupons as in claim 9 further comprising detecting acceptance of the other ~~credit~~ card and printing out a receipt showing the displayed calculated amount provided by use of the other ~~credit~~ card and the calculated discount that would have been provided by use of the predetermined ~~credit~~ card.

11. (currently amended) An apparatus for offering coupons through a couponing system sponsored by a ~~credit~~ card company to a consumer at a point of sale where the point of sale accepts a ~~credit~~ card provided by the sponsoring ~~credit~~ card company, such apparatus comprising:

means for detecting entry of an identifier of an item to be purchased by the consumer at the point of sale;

means for searching a database using the detected identifier of the item to identify a coupon that provides a discount on a purchase price of the item to any consumer when used with the ~~credit~~ card provided by the sponsoring ~~credit~~ card company;

means for calculating a discount offered by the coupon for purchase of the item with the ~~credit~~ card; and

means for displaying at the point of sale the calculated discount available to the consumer based upon use of the ~~credit~~ card provided by the sponsoring ~~credit~~ card company and which is not applicable with competing ~~credit~~ cards.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 11 further comprising means for detecting entry of an identifier of the ~~credit~~ card.

13. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 12 further comprising means for detecting acceptance of the predetermined ~~credit~~ card and printing out a receipt showing the calculated discount provided by use of the ~~credit~~ card.

14. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 13 further comprising means for transferring a file containing the detected acceptance of the ~~credit~~ card and an identifier of the purchased item to a discount processing system.

15. (original) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 14 further comprising means for transferring a summary of purchase of the item to a coupon clearing house and to a manufacturer of the item.

16. (original) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 15 further comprising means for calculating a commission for processing the coupon for purchase of the item and forwarding the commission to the coupon clearing house and the discount processing system.

17. (original) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 16 further comprising means for calculating a commission for processing the coupon and forwarding the calculated commission to an owner of the point of sale.

18. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 11 further comprising means for detecting entry of an identifier of another ~~credit~~ card that is not the ~~predetermined credit~~ card.

19. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 18 further comprising means for detecting acceptance of the other ~~credit~~ card and printing out a receipt showing the displayed calculated amount provided by use of the other ~~credit~~ card and the calculated discount that would have been provided by use of the ~~predetermined credit~~ card.

20. (currently amended) An apparatus for offering coupons through a couponing system sponsored by a credit bank card company to a consumer at a point of sale where the point of sale accepts a credit bank card ~~provided by the sponsoring credit card company~~, such apparatus comprising:

a point of sale terminal adapted to detect entry of an identifier of an item to be purchased by the consumer at the point of sale;

a database adapted to identify a coupon based upon the detected identifier of the item and that provides a discount on a purchase price of the item to any consumer when used with the credit bank card ~~provided by the sponsoring credit card company~~;

a discount processor adapted to calculate a discount offered by the coupon for purchase of the item with the credit bank card; and

a display for displaying at the point of sale the calculated discount available to the consumer based upon use of the credit bank card ~~provided by the sponsoring credit card~~ and which calculated discount is not applicable with ~~competing credit other bank~~ cards.

21. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 20 further comprising a bar code reader adapted to detect entry of an identifier of the credit bank card.

22. (currently amended) The apparatus for offering coupons as in claim 21 further comprising a printer adapted to print a receipt showing the calculated discount provided by use of the credit bank card.